IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 14-19 and 33-38 without prejudice, resulting in the following listing of the claims. This listing replaces and supersedes all prior claim listings.

1. (Original) A coding device comprising:

an evaluation section for deciding, on the basis of the characteristics of an image signal having a plurality of pixel data, the coding order for the plurality of pixel data; and

a coding section for coding the plurality of pixel data in the order decided by the evaluation section.

2. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the evaluation section selects pixel data having a strong correlation with respect to a given noted pixel data, from the plurality of pixel data, and decides the selected pixel data as pixel data next to the noted pixel data.

3. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the evaluation section evaluates the characteristics of the image signal on the basis of a plurality of pixel data included in a predetermined range.

4. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 3, wherein the predetermined range is the same frame or field.

5. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the predetermined range is in the same macroblock in the same frame or field.

6. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 3, wherein the pixel data includes level data indicating the signal level.

7. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the pixel data includes position data indicating the position in the predetermined range.

8. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 7, wherein the evaluation section selects pixel data having a strong correlation on the basis of the level data and the position data of each pixel data in the predetermined range.

9. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 8, wherein the image signal is a color image signal, and the level data includes a plurality of component data so that a color image is expressed by the plurality of component data.

10. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the evaluation section selects pixel data having a strong correlation with respect to the noted pixel data, from the plurality of pixel data, on the basis of the correlation between the position data and respective component data of the noted pixel data on one hand and the position data and respective component data of each pixel data in the predetermined range on the other hand.

11. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coding section differentially codes the plurality of pixel data in the order decided by the evaluation section.

12. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a macroblock splitting section for splitting the image signal into a plurality of macroblocks, wherein the evaluation section decides the coding order for the plurality of image data in each macroblock, for each macroblock.

13. (Original) The coding device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a decimation section for decimating pixel data of a part of the image signal, wherein the evaluation section decides the coding order for the image signal from which the pixel data of a part thereof is decimated by the decimation section.

14 – 19 (Canceled)

20. (Original) A coding method comprising:

a step of deciding, on the basis of the characteristics of an image signal having a plurality of pixel data, the coding order of the plurality of pixel data; and

a step of coding the plurality of pixel data in the order decided at the step of deciding.

21. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the step of deciding includes a step of selecting pixel data having a strong correlation with respect to a given noted pixel data, from the plurality of pixel data, and deciding the selected pixel data as pixel data next to the noted pixel data.

22. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 20, wherein at the step of deciding, the characteristics of the image signal are evaluated on the basis of a plurality of pixel data included in a predetermined range.

23. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 22, wherein the predetermined range is the same frame or field.

24. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the predetermined range is in the same macroblock in the same frame or field.

25. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 22, wherein the pixel data includes level data indicating the signal level.

26. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 25, wherein the pixel data includes position data indicating the position in the predetermined range.

27. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 26, wherein at the step of deciding, pixel data having a strong correlation is selected on the basis of the level data and the position data of each pixel data in the predetermined range.

28. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 27, wherein the image signal is a color image signal, and the level data includes a plurality of component data so that a color image is expressed by the plurality of component data.

29. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 28, wherein at the step of deciding, pixel data having a strong correlation with respect to the noted pixel data is selected from the plurality of pixel data, on the basis of the correlation between the position data and respective component data of the noted pixel data on one hand and the position data and respective component data of each pixel data in the predetermined range on the other hand.

30. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 20, wherein at the step of coding, the plurality of pixel data are differentially coded in the decided order.

31. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 20, further comprising a step of splitting the image signal into a plurality of macroblocks, wherein at the step of deciding, the coding order for the plurality of image data in each macroblock is decided for each macroblock.

32. (Original) The coding method as claimed in claim 20, further comprising a step of decimating pixel data of a part of the image signal, wherein at the step of deciding, the coding order for the image signal from which the pixel data of a part thereof is decimated by the decimation section is decided.

33 – 38 (Canceled)